

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 082960

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJECT: TARAPUR

1. STATE DEPARTMENT REPS IN CLOSED SESSION WITH NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONERS APRIL 11 REVIEWED CURRENT STATE OF PLAY ON TARAPUR.
2. ON QUESTION OF SPENT FUEL STORAGE, OES DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY NOSENZO EXPLAINED THAT WE WERE IN THE PROCESS OF WORKING OUT CONSULTANCY ARRANGEMENT WITH GENERAL ELECTRIC TO ADVISE INDIAN AEC ON PROBLEM. EXECUTIVE BRANCH WAS ALSO ESTABLISHING INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE, ON WHICH NRC WAS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE, TO RECOMMEND DURING COURSE OF NEXT FEW MONTHS MOST ADVISABLE LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF REMOVING SPENT FUEL FROM INDIA.
3. ON QUESTION OF TIMING OF NEXT SHIPMENT, NOSENZO INDICATED THAT

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CATED THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAD NOT DISCUSSED THIS WITH THE INDIANS, OUR LATEST REVIEW OF THE DATA INDICATED THAT BY MODIFYING THEIR MODE OF OPERATION TO WORK REMAINING SCRAP AND ALLOWING CURRENT STOCKPILE OF SPARE ASSEMBLIES TO BE DRAWN DOWN, THE INDIANS COULD GET BY WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FUEL AT REACTORS UNTIL MID-SUMMER 1979 IF THEY CONTINUED TO USE 60 ASSEMBLY RELOADS, OR SPRING 1979 IF THEY

REVERTED TO 85 ASSEMBLY RELOADS. NOSENZO STRESSED THAT THIS WAS NOT THE NORMAL WAY OF OPERATION. MOREOVER, HE NOTED THAT NEW INDIAN PRIME MINISTER HAD ALREADY TOLD THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT A FEW DAYS AGO THAT THE FUEL WAS NEEDED AT THE END OF MAY TO PREVENT ULTIMATE DISRUPTION OF POWER OPERATION. NOSENZO COMMENTED THAT DESAI'S STATEMENT WAS BASED ON EARLIER FINDINGS OF U.S. EXPERTS LAST/KIEFER ON WHICH WE AND THE INDIANS HAD AGREED. IN THIS CONTEXT, NOSENZO NOTED THAT IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION RAISED AFTER THE LAST SESSION WITH THE NRC, THE INDIAN AEC HAD CONFIRMED THEY COULD STRETCH EXISTING SCRAP RUN UNTIL AUGUST 1976, THEREBY PRODUCING AN ADDITIONAL 26 FUEL ASSEMBLIES. HOWEVER, THE INDIANS HAD STRESSED THAT THIS WAS AN INEFFICIENT MODE OF OPERATION.

4. IN TERMS OF OPTIONS, NOSENZO REVIEWED THE DRAFT PAPER CIRCULATING AT THE WORKING LEVEL ON AN INTERAGENCY BASIS. ULTIMATE DECISION ON THE OPTIONS (1. TERMINATION, 2. DISENGAGE AFTER FINAL SHIPMENT, 3. INTERIM SHIPMENT TO BE FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATIONS, OR 4. NEGOTIATIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY FURTHER SHIPMENT, IF SUCCESSFUL) WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AT TOP LEVELS OF THE USG. THE SENIOR STAFF VIEW IN STATE WAS THAT THIRD OPTION OFFERED BEST PROSPECT OF ACHIEVEMENT OF BROADER USG PROLIFERATION GOALS. THE FOURTH OPTION WAS PERHAPS MOST DESIRABLE FROM U.S. DOMESTIC STANDPOINT BUT HAD LITTLE PROSPECT OF SUCCESS WITH THE INDIANS.

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5. IN DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED, COMMISSIONER GILINSKY THOUGHT WE SHOULD HAVE CLEARLY IN MIND OUR NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION ON THE PENDING LICENSE. HE STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT INDIA WOULD BE SEEN AS THE "LITMUS TEST" OF ADMINISTRATION'S NUCLEAR POLICY. IN RESPONSE TO COMMISSIONER KENNEDY'S QUESTIONS, DEPARTMENT WITNESSES CONFIRMED THAT SO FAR INDIANS HAD COMPLIED WITH ALL USG REQUESTS AND APPEARED TO BE ACTING IN GOOD FAITH. KENNEDY EMPHASIZED THAT WE HAD TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INDIAN PERCEPTIONS IF WE WERE TOTAL WITH THE PROBLEM REALISTICALLY.

6. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SESSION, CHAIRMAN ROWDEN SAID THAT ISSUE APPEARED TO REVOLVE LESS AROUND TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAN THE USG'S POLITICAL JUDGMENT OF HOW BEST TO PROCEED. HE SAID THAT NRC AWAITED EXECUTIVE BRANCH RECOMMENDATIONS. NOSENZO SAID THAT WE HOPED FOR THESE IN MATTER OF SEVERAL WEEKS AT THE LATEST.
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